

SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

Beat Goes on at our Service Centers...



Hard-hitting hurricanes and a soggy summer didn't slow down activity at the South Florida Water Management District's regional Service Centers. In addition to tireless emergency response, recovery and communications duties associated with the storms, other work didn't miss a beat. Here's a sampling of the action:



Members of the Big Cypress Basin Board, as well as state and local officials mark completion of the CR-951 structure at an Aug. 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony. A dedication ceremony to mark completion of the canal improvements and bridges was held Oct. 22.

BIG CYPRESS BASIN SERVICE CENTER **Program expedites canal improvements in Collier County**

Water supply and flood protection are two primary elements of the District's mission and two of the main challenges facing Collier County. One of the ways the Big Cypress Basin office is meeting these challenges is through an aggressive Capital Construction Program to reduce dry season overdrainage and to enhance wet season stormwater conveyance. The latest accomplishment in this program is the improvements to the CR-951 Canal in Collier County.

The project involves excavation of two miles of canal, replacement of eight undersized bridges, and construction of a new water control structure with backpumping facility. The improvements will enhance water management and reduce freshwater surges into Naples Bay during periods of heavy rainfall, helping the endangered ecosystem in the bay. The pumps will be operated during the dry season.

PALM BEACH SERVICE CENTER **Reaching out to diverse community groups**

More than 600 people attended the Palm Beach County Caucus of Black Elected Officials Third Annual Black Tie Gala on Aug. 13 at The Breakers hotel in Palm Beach. Governing Board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas, District Executive Director Henry Dean and other staff networked with elected officials from Palm Beach, Broward, and Martin counties.

On Aug. 21, Palm Beach County Commissioner Addie Greene spearheaded Youth Fest 2004 at Palm Beach Community College in Lake Worth. Free and open to the public, hundreds of girls and boys ages 8 to 17 participated in a day of sports in conjunction with the Palm Beach County Sports Institute and Commission. The theme of the event was "Creating Champions One Child at a Time." State senators and county commissioners competed in a celebrity basketball shoot-out. As an event sponsor, the Palm Beach Service Center contributed District educational materials to the youth.

BROWARD SERVICE CENTER **Busy Broward bustles with outreach activities**

This summer, the Broward County YMCA Youth, Broward County NAACP Youth, the Urban League of Broward County, and Maximizing Out of School Time partnered with the Broward Service Center to give 95 minority youth a glimpse into the Everglades. The group of middle and high school youth toured the River of Grass on airboats and then learned about the protectors of the Everglades during an educational alligator show.

In order to advise local community vendors of available business opportunities with the South Florida

Water Management District, a Procurement Workshop at the African-American Library and Research Center in Broward County was held Oct. 28. District Procurement Director Frank Hayden, Broward Service Center Director Michael Jackson and Governing Board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas shared procurement information with the more than 100 minority vendors in attendance at the workshop.

MIAMI-DADE SERVICE CENTER **District gets national exposure at Urban League conference**

Florida's five water management districts came together in late July for an exhibition booth at this year's National Urban League Conference in Detroit. The sole environmental restoration and protection exhibit was visited by more than 5,000 people during the national conference, which was themed "Empowerment: Building



Miami-Dade Service Center staffer Charles C. Scott II (right) greets National Urban League President Marc H. Morial at the District's exhibit booth.

on the Civil Rights Movement." South Florida Water Management District sponsorship of the conference supports our partnership with the Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach chapters of the National Urban League. Governing Board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas attended the event with District staff.

Miami River cleanup a District focus

Clean-up of the Miami River and other local water resource projects to benefit Miami-Dade communities continue to be the focus for District Governing Board Member Irela Bagué, newly elected chair of the Miami River Commission. The South Florida Water Management District has been a strong supporter of the commission's efforts, with \$250,000 earmarked for 2005. In March, the District presented \$1 million in state funding to the City of Miami for dredging and river bank restoration in a 1-mile segment of Wagner Creek – a tributary to the Miami River. The commission hosted its first-ever Miami River Marine Industries Symposium, an all-day economic development program on Sept. 27 in Miami. Keynote speakers included U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Bruno Barriero and Ms. Bagué.

MARTIN-ST. LUCIE SERVICE CENTER **Taylor Creek dredging to improve health of Indian River Lagoon**

Work continues on the Taylor Creek/C-25 Canal Restoration project, which involves the dredging of Taylor Creek from the C-25 spillway structure, and the Fort Pierce Farms C-1 Canal spillway structure to the Indian River Lagoon.

The project will remove approximately 210,000 cubic yards of sediments. Once the sediments are removed, Taylor Creek will function as a silt trap to accumulate fine-grained silt before it is discharged to the Indian River Lagoon.

Underscoring the importance of this project is



Workers continue dredging Taylor Creek/C-25 Canal to remove sediments.

demonstrated through funding support by several partnering agencies, including the South Florida Water Management District, St. Johns River Water Management District/National Estuary Program, Florida Inland Navigation District, and St. Lucie County.

St. Lucie County is proceeding with construction of Phase 1 of the dredging project. A six month "manatee window" required that the dredging work be completed by the end of September. Phase 2 is anticipated to be constructed in April 2005.

Project cost is approximately \$4 million.

OKEECHOBEE SERVICE CENTER **Local businesses help District get the word out**

The Okeechobee Service Center has been working closely with local business partners to place displays conveying news and information regarding District projects and initiatives. Bait and tackle shops, marinas and motels now feature the brightly colored and attractive displays in their lobbies. Public libraries and chambers of commerce in Glades and Okeechobee counties also are carrying literature about the South



Okeechobee Service Center staffer Sandy Jurban (left) joins Riverside National Bank Branch Manager Tabitha Trent in the Okeechobee bank's lobby where one of 26 District information displays is featured by local business partners.

Florida Water Management District. The displays will be updated regularly with new information and will feature announcements of upcoming public meetings and opportunities for public participation. In all, 26 displays have been placed throughout the two-county area.

ORLANDO SERVICE CENTER **District contributes \$1.1 million to complete wildlife corridor**

Working in partnership with Orange County, the Orlando Service Center is helping bring to fruition Green Place – a vision of Orange County Chairman Richard Crotty and the Orange County Board of County Commissioners. The Green Place program seeks to acquire conservation and environmentally sensitive land and create green space in areas experiencing rapid growth.

In August, the District Governing Board voted to support the first acquisition under the Green Place/SFWMD partnership – a 240-acre parcel rich with wetland habitat at the northern end of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades watershed. District Governing Board member Harkley Thornton presented a \$1.1 million check to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners at its September meeting.